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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Turkmenistan

Addendum

Information provided by Turkmenistan on the follow-up to the concluding observations of the Committee*

[Date received: 13 February 2015]

* In accordance with the information transmitted to States parties regarding the processing of their reports, the present document was not edited.

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Information in follow-up to Concluding Observations

(paragraphs 15 and 23) of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women made during dialogue in October 2012 at its fifty-third session.

In accordance with paragraph 48 of the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, we are providing, within two years, information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 15 and 23.

Paragraph 15.

As an active member of the world community, Turkmenistan has acceded to numerous international human-rights conventions, treaties and agreements. It proved its firm commitment to gender equality and the advancement of women by means of acceding to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), without reservations, in 1996 and to its Optional Protocol.

Strictly abiding by its obligations under ratified documents of distinguished world organizations, including the UN, Turkmenistan has been consistently incorporating into national legislation and practices universally recognized international legal norms and regulations, including those pertaining to the creation of equal opportunities for men and women.

On 22 January 2015, the Head of State approved a National Programme of Action on Ensuring Gender Equality in Turkmenistan for 2015-2020, which is based on the national priorities and interests of the country and is geared to supporting and implementing the reforms initiated by President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov.

The National Programme of Action sets out a general strategy and national policy priorities for gender equality and makes provision for a comprehensive system of measures based on the new realities — the market economy and social partnership.

Based on the Constitution of Turkmenistan, the National Programme of Action on Ensuring Gender Equality in Turkmenistan is consistent with the basic provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UN Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and on the Political Rights of Women and with the outcome documents of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), the Beijing Plus 10 documents and the Millennium Development Goals, as well as with the documents of the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other international organizations.

The recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women during dialogue in October 2012 at the Committee's fifty-third session were taken into account and factored in the development of the National Programme of Action. The National Programme of Action for Ensuring

Gender Equality in Turkmenistan for 2015-2020 is a comprehensive document that defines objectives and implementation strategies, as well as the structures responsible for their development in terms of the promotion of gender equality in various facets of women's lives.

Despite the headway made in recent years, there exists an obvious need to continue working to ensure gender equality via the law in all spheres. At the legislative level, the need exists to continue monitoring Turkmenistan laws and to make appropriate amendments arising from the international obligations of conventions and treaties ratified by the country.

The National Programme of Action contains a number of measures and strategies for incorporating principles of gender equality in all spheres of life in Turkmenistan in various fields, and the practical implementation of those measures and strategies will make positive changes to the protection of the rights of women and men and will, by and large, help the State to fulfill its international obligations on that question.

The measures of the National Programme will be implemented by State administrative authorities and local executive bodies that enlist academic and public associations and the financial and technical potential of international organizations.

The measures of the National Programme will be funded with monies provided for in the State budget.

The National Programme of Action for Ensuring Gender Equality was developed to be implemented in the period of 2015-2020. At the end of its implementation period, plans call for the preparation of a new National Programme of Action that will make it possible to develop a priority policy based on the progress made in gender equality.

The National Programme of Action for Ensuring Gender Equality will make it possible to rather specifically and clearly define new areas, forms and methods for working with gender issues in Turkmenistan and will raise them to a higher systemic and qualitative level.

Paragraph 23.

Under way at present in Turkmenistan is Constitutional reform that takes into account the socio-political and socio-economic reforms in the country. The primary aim of the reform is to reflect more fully the spirit of the times and needs, the adjustments being made to regulations in the country, and the greater conformance of those regulations with international standards. The specially created Constitutional Commission is handling the matters involving improvement of the Constitution of Turkmenistan. In that context, the Concluding Observations of UN treaty bodies, as well as the Recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review of Turkmenistan, are being taken into account and are being factored in. Among them are questions of human rights, gender equality, families and family values and the protection of mother and child.

On 14 December 2007, the Turkmenistan Parliament, implementing the provisions of international conventions, passed the special Law of Turkmenistan on State Guarantees of the Equality of Women. The Turkmenistan Parliament has now created a working group for preparing an amended version of the Law of Turkmenistan on State Guarantees of the Equality of Women that takes in to account

the changes that have occurred in the socio-political, socio-economic and cultural development of the country and focuses on the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women that were made during dialogue in October 2012 in its fifty-third session 2015-2020.

In the National Programme of Action for Ensuring Gender Equality in Turkmenistan for 2015-2020, plans call for setting out priority areas in combating all forms of violence against women. With an eye to that, preparations are under way to conduct studies/surveys of the extent of violence against women, as well as the forms and root causes of the violence. Accordingly, in November 2014, seminars were held to acquaint members of the interdepartmental commission on compliance with Turkmenistan's international obligations in the field of human rights and international humanitarian law and members of the working group attached to the commission with legislative practices and to examine the methodology for conducting sample surveys regarding domestic violence and the methods for collecting and processing data on such violence. This work will continue in 2015. Plans call for the creation of a working group on the conduct of sample surveys on domestic violence; the adaptation of the methodology and development of tools for the conduct of such surveys; the designation of pilot facilities; the training of interviewers; training sessions for working group members on the methodology for the collection of domestic violence data via sample surveys; working meetings; and consultations. All those actions will be performed with technical assistance provided by international experts.

In addition, recent years (2013 and 2014) have seen seminars and round tables held for employees of State structures and representatives of law enforcement agencies, local administrative agencies, and public associations on international standards and mechanisms for protecting human rights, including the rights of women, and on gender equality.

The Human Rights Information Centre attached to the Turkmen National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights in the Office of the President of Turkmenistan was opened on 2 May 2011 within the framework of the joint project launched by the Government of Turkmenistan (2009-July 2013) and carried out by the European Commission, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to strengthen the national capacity of Turkmenistan to protect and promote human rights.

Similar centres were opened in 2012 at institutions of higher learning in all regions of the country. The purpose of those structures is to raise awareness among State employees, researchers, college students, representatives of local administrative authorities, community organizers and other interested parties with regard to international experience in the field of human rights.

The Centre regularly hosts public discussions, meetings and round tables on issues in public law, the protection and exercise of human rights and freedoms and further development of civil society, with the participation of State officials and community leaders of the country and members of the academic community and international organizations and researchers from the National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights in the Office of the President. Visitors are assisted in choosing the appropriate literature and materials and in meeting their research and creative needs.

The work associated with the conduct of seminars, meetings and competitions on the topic of human rights, including on issues of women's rights, and with the participation of national and international experts will continue in the human rights centres in all the regions of the country and in the city of Ashgabat.